"URBEM, URBEM COLE!" TAKING A WALK IN CICERO'S *VESTIGIA*

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In this article, I have followed Cicero expressing himself in different works belonging to different genres, with regard to feelings of patriotism and homesickness. His love for his place of birth, Arpinum, was strong, but the love for Rome was even stronger. Still, for Cicero Arpinum also qualifies as patria. On the whole, Cicero tends to prefer city life above the countryside, but depending on circumstances he can be positive about the rural life as well. However, for Cicero Rome is definitely the centre of his world. When away from Rome, he misses the city dearly and does everything to return as soon as possible. Cicero experienced both his 'exile' from Rome and his governorship of Cilicia as particularly strenuous and difficult phases. With regard to Greece and the Greeks, Cicero displays the very ambiguity that is characteristic of Roman nobility as a whole.

1. *Introduction*

In this article I will take a closer look at Cicero expressing himself in various works belonging to different genres, with regard to feelings of patriotism and homesickness. As is well known, Cicero was born in Arpinum, a small town approximately seventy miles southeast of Rome. He arrived at Rome as a young *homo novus* who could not rely on an illustrious ancestry. However, he made it to the consulate in 63 BC and fought for the Republic of Rome. Always eager to participate in the politics of the Forum, he occasionally also showed great affection for the countryside.

I shall focus on a few crucial periods in Cicero's life and his responses to particular milieux at the time, and try to discern a pattern in the way in which Cicero represents countryside and the city of Rome. What were the feelings Cicero had when he was absent from Rome, and how can these be compared to his behaviour when active in the city itself ? Are there other places besides Rome towards which Cicero displays affection? An additional question is whether Cicero ever showed a clear preference for either city or countryside – or, if not, how he could cope with such ambiguity of feeling. In the discussion that follows attention is given to particular keywords (indicated in bold below) that appear frequently in some of Cicero's works where these themes are discussed.

2. *At home in Arpinum*

First of all, I would like you to join Cicero himself, his brother Quintus and his good friend Atticus, in the Arpinate countryside. There, in the late fifties BC, at the beginning of his exposé about religious law, Cicero shows himself literally 'moved'

by the *locus amoenus*[1], not only because of its natural beauty (notwithstanding the English scholar who wrote an article about Cicero's assumed lack of awareness of natural beauty[2]), but in this case particularly because it reminds him of his youth:

> *Quia, si verum dicimus, haec est mea et huius fratris mei* ***germana patria****[3]; hic enim orti stirpe antiquissima sumus, hic sacra, hic genus, hic maiorum multa* ***vestigia****. Quid plura?*
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> To tell you the truth, this is really my own fatherland, and that of my brother, for we are descended from a very ancient family of this district; here are our ancestral sacred rites and the origin of our race; here are many memorials of our forefathers. What more need I say ? [Leg. II.3][4]

Indeed, what more need Cicero say? As the proverb says: 'home is where the heart is', and rightly so. Atticus' reaction is even more telling: he says that originally he had the impression that the place had nothing to offer but rocks and mountains, but now, after he has seen the spot with his own eyes, he has grown to like the villa and its surroundings. The place has become *amicior* to him, simply from the fact that Cicero was born there.[5] And then he adds, in a provisional attempt to explain this feeling:

> … ***movemur*** *enim nescio quo pacto* ***locis ipsis****, in quibus* ***eorum, quos diligimus aut admiramur****, adsunt* ***vestigia****. Me quidem ipsae illae nostrae Athenae non tam operibus magnificis exquisitisque antiquorum artibus delectant quam* ***recordatione summorum virorum****, ubi quisque habitare, ubi sedere, ubi disputare sit solitus, studioseque eorum etiam sepulchra contemplor.*
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> …for we are affected in some mysterious way by places about which cluster memories of those whom we love and admire. Even in our beloved Athens, it is not so much the stately buildings and the exquisite works of ancient art which delight me, as the recollection of its peerless men – where they each used to

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1 The substantive *amoenitas* is used by Cicero in *Leg.* II.3 and 7, while Atticus in II.6 uses the comparative *amoenius*. More on *amoenitas* can be found in D'Arms 1970: 45-48; cf. Pohlenz 1938: 107.

2 Davies 1971 states that Cicero had no concept of 'pure beauty' (this opinion, though open to criticism, may be excused when one considers the immense difficulty that philosophers like Kant have had to formulate a definition of beauty and aesthetical experience), but that for him, beauty was always something functional (for example the oak of Marius from *Leg.* I.1, or the plane tree in *De or.* I.28). Nature for Cicero was fundamentally ordered, and therefore he preferred the universal – or cosmological – dimension over particular instances of (natural) beauty, and was only interested in the most striking natural phenomena. Nevertheless, his affection for Arpinum seems to be partly because of its natural attractiveness. Dyck in his commentary ad loc. also speaks of 'natural beauty'.

3 This collocation appears only here in classical Latin, an observation I owe to Hammond 1951.

4 Unless indicated otherwise, all English translations have been taken from the Loeb editions of Cicero's works.

5 Compare Dyck 2004:24: "It is Atticus' sympathetic presence that enables Marcus to speak of these personal matters", and 25: "… the banter between Atticus and Marcus strikes one as the most natural and unforced in the entire corpus of Ciceronian dialogues."

> live, to sit, and to carry on their discussions; and I even love to gaze upon their tombs. [*Leg.* II.4]

The keywords here are *movemur* and *vestigia*, the latter of which was also used by the Cicero-*persona* himself. We will see these terms used again. In order to avoid possible misunderstanding, immediately after Cicero's nostalgic confession Atticus responds by asking him how one must evaluate Cicero's loyalties to his place of birth and also to Rome: can Cicero really have two fatherlands at the same time? Consider the example of Cato for instance: is his *patria* Rome, or rather Tusculum (whose inhabitants had Roman citizenship from around 381 BC)? Cicero answers as follows:

> *Ego merhercule et illi et omnibus municipibus duas esse censeo patrias, unam naturae, alteram civitatis…*
>
> Surely I think that he (= Cato) and all natives of Italian towns have two fatherlands, one by nature and the other by citizenship … [*Leg.* II.5]

He also mentions, in addition to the example of Cato, Theseus and *vestri Attici*, 'those inhabitants of Attica of yours', as other examples of people with two fatherlands. Then, somewhat surprisingly, he comes up with what we might call a 'hierarchy of fatherlands':

> *…sic nos et eam* ***patriam*** *ducimus, ubi nati, et illam, a qua excepti sumus. Sed* ***necesse est caritate eam praestare, qua rei publicae nomen universae civitatis est****; pro qua mori et cui nos totos dedere et in qua nostra omnia ponere et quasi consecrare debemus.* ***Dulcis autem non multo secus est ea, quae genuit, quam illa, quae excepit.*** *Itaque ego hanc meam esse patriam prorsus numquam negabo, dum illa sit maior, haec in ea contineatur…*
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> …so we consider both the place where we were born our fatherland, and also the city into which we have been adopted. But that fatherland must stand first in our affection in which the name of republic signifies the common citizenship of all of us. For her it is our duty to die, to her to give ourselves entirely, to place on her altar, and, as it were, to dedicate to her service, all that we possess. But the fatherland which was our parent is not much less dear to us than the one which adopted us. Thus I shall never deny that my fatherland is here, though my other fatherland is greater and includes this one within it … " [*Leg.* II.5]

After all, Cicero cannot deny his clear preference for the city that brought him his greatest fame and power! Consider the following passage from the first book of *De oratore*:

> *Ac, si nos, id quod maxime debet, nostra* ***patria*** *delectat; cuius rei tanta est vis, ac tanta natura, ut 'Ithacam illam in asperrimis saxulis, tamquam nidulum, affixam,' sapientissimus vir immortalitati anteponeret; quo amore tandem inflammati esse debemus in eiusmodi* ***patriam****, quae una in omnibus terris domus est virtutis, imperii, dignitatis!*

> And if our own native land is our joy, as to the uttermost it ought to be, - a sentiment of such strength and quality that a hero of consummate prudence[6] gave preference over immortality to 'that Ithaca of his, lodged like a tiny nest upon the roughest of small crags,'- with love how ardent must we surely be fired for a country such as ours, standing alone among all lands as the home of excellence, imperial power and good report! [*De or*. I.196]

Leeman, Pinkster and Nelson remark *ad loc.* that Cicero's main thought here is that someone who is really interested in his fatherland, must also study its *mens*, *mos*, *disciplina*; but that implicitly he argues for three other points: a) that everybody has a duty to love his fatherland, b) that love of one's country is a strong instinctive feeling and c) that Rome is unique in the world as a fatherland.[7]

Still, native Arpinum remains Cicero's home. That was already keenly observed by Pohlenz, who characterized the *De legibus* in terms of its "Heimatluft" (the scent of one's birthplace, so to say; in its conciseness and manifold associations, the German term is hard to translate).[8] On the other hand, there were two factors which helped Cicero to bridge the gap: the fact that Arpinum was more friendly to Rome than on average could be expected of Italian *municipia* (having already had full citizenship rights since 188 BC)[9], and the saying of Pompey, quoted by Atticus in *Leg.* II.6, that the Roman Republic had to be grateful to Arpinum, because two of its saviours (*conservatores)* came from there, namely Marius and Cicero himself.[10]

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6 The same example of Odysseus occurs also in *Leg.* II.3.

7 Leeman/Pinkster/Nelson 1985: 105. Hammond 1951, argues for a distinction between the strictly legal viewpoint (according to which one can only have one citizenship at the time) and the more practical viewpoint that takes into account that the exclusive nature of Roman citizenship was in fact breaking down and that in the Italy of the Late Republic, the practice of dual citizenship must have become common, even if Roman law did not allow it. There is also the sentimental aspect, cf. Dyck 2004: 256 "Marcus argues that, in spite of his use of the phrase *germana patria*, origin as a *municipalis* need not dilute loyalty to Rome": the 'smaller homeland', however, also has a claim to the title *patria*.

8 Pohlenz 1938: 105. Pohlenz wrote: "Es kann kein Zufall sein, daβ uns auch aus seinen Gesetzen so stark wie aus keinem anderen seiner Werke Heimatluft entgegenweht." (It cannot be by chance that also from his Laws a scent of his birthplace blows us in the face like in no other of his works.)

9 So Salmon 1972: 75-77.

10 Significantly, Cicero has Atticus conclude immediately after quoting Pompey: *uti iam videar adduci hanc quoque, quae te procrearit, esse patriam tuam.* ("Thus I am now inclined to share your view that this town which brought you forth is also your fatherland.") Cf. also *Pro Sulla* 22, where Cicero is called a *peregrinus rex*, a 'foreign king' by Torquatus, just like Tarquinius and Numa. He pretends to ask for an explanation, and Torquatus answers: *hoc dico te esse ex municipio*, after which Cicero retorts: *fateor et addo ex eo municipio unde iterum iam salus huic urbi imperioque missa est*. As Berry 1996 ad loc. rightly remarks, *peregrinus* is an overstatement, because Cicero was a *cives* and thus no *peregrinus*. But Cicero during his life must have become used to this cheap kind of sneering, which was often repeated.

The general atmosphere of this nostalgic *ambulatio* reminds us of other evocative walks described in the works of Cicero, like the famous one at the beginning of *De oratore*, recently referred to by James Zetzel as "Plato with Pillows"[11], or like the one which forms the opening of the fifth book of his *De finibus bonorum et malorum* – but we will come to that later. Let us now first take a look at Rome.

3. City life in Rome

Cicero's *Pro Caelio* gives an intriguing display of the urban life-style of contemporary Rome.[12]

The comical allusions in this speech have become classic ever since the study of K. Geffcken, '*Comedy in the Pro Caelio'*. Cicero "brings the holiday mood into the Forum" and shows himself sensible to the special atmosphere that the Ludi Megalensis have created in Rome.[13] In this atmosphere of leisure and relaxation, the trial of Caelius has to go on. Cicero chooses to put one of his gravest attacks on the integrity and the behaviour of Clodia into the mouth of one of her forebears, notably the grave and old-fashioned Appius Claudius Caecus. After his stern rebuke, Cicero offers Clodia an alternative that may be more to her liking:

> *Sin autem* ***urbanius*** *me agere mavis, sic agam tecum; removebo illum senem durum ac paene* ***agrestem****; ex his igitur tuis sumam aliquem ac potissimum minimum fratrem, qui est in isto genere* ***urbanissimus*** *…*
>
> "But if you prefer that I should take a more refined tone, I will proceed with you in this way. I will dismiss that uncouth and almost rustic man, and accordingly take one of your present relatives, and by choice your younger brother, who is in that respect a perfect man of the world …" [*Cael*. 36]

Keywords here are *agrestis* (as a variation on *rusticus*) and *urbanus*, the latter of which forms part of what B. Krostenko has called "the language of social performance".[14]

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11 Part of the title of Zetzel 2003, who refers to the well-known resemblances with (the setting of) Plato's *Phaedrus* – he also terms it "cushioning Plato", p.121 – although Zetzel also stresses the major differences between both works: Cicero's message and argument in *De oratore* are not Platonic, or even anti-Platonic. For another interesting survey of similarities and ("highly significant") differences, see Görler 1988.

12 Here I will not speak about the brilliant way Cicero plays with notions of concealment and visibility in order to make the hidden mover (Clodia) visible, the main focus of Ramage 1984. Nor can I deal here with the special tactics that Cicero used to emphasize his own points and belittle those of the accusers, or the specific and very effective ploy of putting everything in the form of a (real or set-up) dilemma; this structuring ploy of dilemmas is skilfully argued for in Craig 1989.

13 Compare Geffcken 1973: 12, where she speaks of a "conspiracy of understanding" that Cicero creates between himself and the jury.

14 Krostenko 2001: *passim*.

This language was coined by major semantic shifts in the third and second centuries BC, in order to provide the Roman cultural elite with an adequate vocabulary to express their aestheticism. Thus, words like *bellus*, *lepidus*, *festivus*, *facetus*, *venustus* and *elegans* all acquire new meanings, partly in addition to and partly replacing the older ones.[15] The emphasis lay on urbanity, refinement and wit, especially with regard to dinner parties, the so-called *convivia*, the Roman adaptation of the Greek *symposia* which in Cicero's time were very much en vogue. At these parties, the nobility wanted to show off by putting on witty performances[16], the spoken equivalent of their lavishly decorated houses and rich collections of art. Krostenko amply demonstrates Cicero's ambiguous stance towards this 'subculture': depending on circumstances (as fits the true orator), he straightforwardly rejects these new eccentric performances, poses as an outsider who is inexperienced in aestheticism or deems it something definitely non-Roman. Only occasionally he seems to condone it. In the *Pro Caelio*, he is merely trying to bring out its bad side, with Clodia (and in the background her brother) as his main target, but in the meantime he tries to arouse sympathy for Caelius, the young man who was also attracted to this demi-monde and to the 'Medea of the Palatine' (§18, said of Clodia, of course) as well. For him, unlike the Clodii, Cicero pleads extenuating circumstances: his age and the fact that he was lured into these circles by Clodia; then: such is Rome!

The typical life of the city that it exemplifies can be contrasted with the simple rustic life, of which Cicero occasionally was scornful.[17] In the *Pro Caelio* Cicero exploits not only the theme of severe, almost rural sternness and simplicity versus urban enticements, but also the *topos* of moral decline. Cicero defers slightly from the standard form of this argument, and argues that one can also set the standard too high,

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15 This is demonstrated by Krostenko in great detail in his first chapter, notably paragraphs I.5 to I.10.

16 See also Corbeill 1996.

17 In this Cicero was no exception. The rustic was normally seen as 'country bumpkin', at the bottom of the social scale, below even the provincial. Cf. Balsdon 1979. However, when it proved to be expedient, he managed to praise that life as well, as is shown in his speech *Pro Roscio Amerino*. Roscius is depicted as a prototypical *rusticus*, who by definition is not capable of patricide, the charge that has been brought against him by the "urban scoundrels" Capito, Magnus and Chrysogonus. Cicero provides Roscius with stereotypically rustic traits, but is at the same time careful to make a distinction between old and young *rustici*: whereas the standard character of the irascible old farmer was not unequivocally positive, the younger countryman could be assumed to arouse sympathy and respect by his humble and tolerant behaviour. As a young, simple farmer, Roscius is not at ease in the big city of Rome and avoids it as much as possible. On the other hand, his accusers possess, according to Cicero, just the vices which are characteristic of the city: *luxuries*, *avaritia* and *audacia*. Cf. Davies 1971: 153-155, who gives as a characteristic quote *Phil.* VIII.9*: Omnes Cafones, omnes Saxae ceteraeque pestes, quae secuntur Antonium, aedes sibi optimas, hortos, Tusculana, Albana definiunt. Atque etiam* ***homines agrestes, si homines illi ac non pecudes potius****, inani spe ad aquas usque et Puteolos provehuntur.* ("All the Cafos, all the Saxas, and the rest of the pests that follow Antonius, are specifying for themselves the finest mansions and pleasure-grounds, estates at Tusculum and Alba; and even rough countrymen – if men they are, and not rather beasts – are borne along by empty hopes as far as watering places and Puteoli.")

like the Stoic philosophers did.[18] This is the upbeat to his *detur aliquid aetati* argument – in it, he says:

> *Ex hoc genere illos fuisse arbitror* ***Camillos, Fabricios, Curios*** *omnesque eos, qui haec ex minimis tanta fecerunt. Verum haec genera virtutum non solum in moribus nostris, sed vix etiam in libris reperiuntur. …neque solum apud nos, qui hanc sectam rationemque vitae re magis quam verbis secuti sumus, sed etiam apud* ***Graecos****, doctissimos homines, quibus, cum facere non possent, loqui tamen et scribere honeste et magnifice licebat, alia quaedam mutatis* ***Graeciae*** *temporibus praecepta exstiterunt.*
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> Such I think were those famous Camilli, Fabricii, Curii, and all those who made Rome so great that was once so small. But virtues of this kind are no longer to be found in our manners, indeed but rarely in our books. … and not only among us who have followed this path and rule of life in practice rather than in theory, but also among the Greeks, men of profound learning, who in their speech and in their writing, but not in their actions, could reach honour and brilliance, have precepts of another kind come into fashion now that the times have changed for Greece. [*Cael.* 39-40]

There is yet another place which plays an important role in the *Pro Caelio*, apart from Rome. That place is Baiae: what more need I say?[19] Cicero makes the place itself speak out loud (*personare*), telling us all we need to know:

> *Nihilne igitur illa vicinitas redolet, nihilne hominum fama, nihil* ***Baiae*** *denique ipsae loquuntur? Illae vero non loquuntur solum, verum etiam* ***personant****, huc unius mulieris libidinem esse prolapsam, ut ea non modo solitudinem ac tenebras atque haec flagitiorum integumenta non quaerat, sed in turpissimis rebus frequentissima celebritate et clarissima luce laetetur.*
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> "Does not then that notorious neighbourhood put us on the scent? Does public rumour, does Baiae itself say nothing? Yes, Baiae does not merely talk, but even cries aloud that there is one woman whose amorous passions are so degraded that, far from seeking privacy and darkness and the usual screens for vice, she revels in her degraded lusts amid the most open publicity and in the broadest daylight." [*Cael.* 47]

A curious parallel can be found in the invective speech *In Clodium et Curionem*, which presumably dates from 61 BC.[20] Unfortunately, we only have it in a very fragmentary state. But what we have is already quite interesting. In one of the

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18 Narducci 1997: 66.

19 Cf. D'Arms 1970: Ch. 3, esp. p. 42-43.

20 On the uncertain date of the speech, see Geffcken 1973: 63-64 with note 1. She carefully distinguishes this *oratio perpetua* from the better known *altercatio* between Cicero and Clodius which took place in the Senate on May 15 61 BC, a literal report of which is given by Cicero in *Att.* I.16.10, although both have a similar content. Crawford 1984: 106-110 explains that this speech was presumably published without Cicero's consent, based on his *oratio* in the senate on May 15, 61 BC.

fragments (nr. 20), Clodius, of all people, is described as a *homo durus ac priscus, tristis ac severus* ('a harsh, old-fashioned, stern and severe man'), a true puritan, allegedly reproaching Cicero for having been in Baiae for some vague reasons of health. Cicero defends himself as well as he can. But then Clodius asks him rather bluntly: *Quid homini Arpinati cum Baiis, agresti ac rustico*? ("What has a man of Arpinum, an uncivilized provincial boor, [to do] with Baiae?")[21] A striking parallel to the questioning of Clodia by Appius Claudius Caecus; we may also compare Catiline's jest at Cicero, as given by Sallust, naming him an *inquilinus*, literally a 'lodger' or a 'tenant', but used figuratively here of the *homo novus* Cicero. Of course, the casting of Clodius for this role as the one who reproves someone else is a very fine demonstration of Cicero's masterly use of irony.

Another fragment (nr. 22) gives an opposite division of roles: there Cicero pokes fun at Clodius' feminine disguise in the Bona Dea scandal and contrasts him as man of the city with Cicero himself and his audience as *rustici*, the difference being the ability to dress up as a woman.[22] Cicero calls Clodius *tu vero festivus, tu elegans, tu solus urbanus*, 'you [are] amusing, you [are] refined, you [are] the only one [who is] sophisticated', but none of this is meant as a compliment:

> *O singulare prodigium atque monstrum. Nonne te huius templi, non urbis, non vitae, non lucis pudet?*
>
> O strange marvel and monstrosity. Do not this temple, the city, your life and the daylight fill you with shame ?[23]

4. Cicero away from Rome

So much for Rome and the *Pro Caelio*. Let's see what happens when Cicero was made to leave Rome behind. He was very eager to be in Rome, and when forced to leave the city, longed desperately for news about the city. He expresses himself in no uncertain terms when abroad in Cilicia, where he was obliged to perform his duty as governor:

> *Sed redeo ad illud. Noli putare mihi aliam consolationem esse* ***huius ingentis molestiae*** *nisi quod spero non longiorem annua fore. Hoc me ita velle multi non credunt ex consuetudine aliorum: tu, qui scis, omnem diligentiam adhibebis, tum scilicet cum id agi debebit, cum ex Epiro redieris.*

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21 Cf. *Att.* I.16.10: *Quid homini Arpinati cum aquis calidis* ?

22 Effeminacy was a standard ingredient of invective, cf. Corbeill 1996: Ch. 4. For a concise survey of what invective was like in ancient Rome, see his contribution on Ciceronian invective in May 2002: 197-217. See also Craig 2004 and Booth 2007.

23 Underneath all the quarrels and animosity between Clodius and Cicero, there is a subtle and delicate mechanism at work concerning the question of who may rightly feel himself most Roman and most truly devoted to the *res publica*. Who really embodies Rome: Cicero, even when he is in exile, or Clodius, being declared a *hostis* because of the Bona Dea affair, and so in a way having exiled himself; the new man with high moral standards or the *nobilis* with a hang for populism and vulgar taste? More on this in section 4; see also Cohen 2007.

> But I come back to this: you must believe that my one consolation in this colossal bore is that I expect it will only last a year. Many people don't believe I am sincere about this, judging me by others. But you, who know, must spare no pains, I mean naturally when the time for action comes, after you get back from Epirus. [*Att.* V.2.3, May 51]

So he is determined to keep this involuntary interval as short as possible, and asks his friends in Rome for their cooperation:

> *Ne provincia nobis prorogetur, per fortunas, dum ades, quicquid provideri <poterit> provide. Non dici potest* ***quam flagrem desiderio urbis****, quam vix harum rerum* ***insulsitatem*** *feram.*
>
> For mercy's sake, take every means you can find, so long as you are in town, to guard against any extension of my tenure. I cannot tell you how passionately I long for Rome, how difficult I find it to endure the insipidity of my present environment. [*Att.* V.11.1; 6 July 51]

Now for Cicero, *Rome* is where the heart is! In fact, he begs his friends who are in Rome to send him all the news, and they can barely satisfy his curiosity. Cicero urges them in an emotional outburst to stay where they are and not to underestimate their privileged situation, like the following telling example from a letter to Marcus Caelius Rufus:

> ***Urbem, urbem, mi Rufe, cole et in ista luce vive!*** *Omnis peregrinatio, quod ego ab adulescentia iudicavi, obscura et sordida est iis quorum industria Romae potest illustris esse. Quod cum probe scirem, utinam in sententia permansissem! Cum una merhecule ambulatiuncula atque uno sermone nostro omnis fructus provinciae non confero. Spero me integritatis laudem consecutum: non erat minor ex contemnenda quam est ex conservata provincia. Spem triumphi inicis: satis gloriose triumpharem, non essem quidem tam diu* ***in desiderio rerum mihi carissimarum***.
>
> Rome! Stick to Rome, my dear fellow, and live in the limelight! Sojourn abroad of any kind, as I have thought from my youth upwards, is squalid obscurity for those whose efforts can win lustre in the capital. I knew this well enough, and I only wish I had stayed true to my conviction. I do assure you that in my eyes all I get from the province is not worth a single stroll, a single talk with you. I hope I have won some credit for integrity, but I should have gained as much of that by despising the province as I have by saving it from ruin. You suggest the hope of a Triumph. My Triumph would have been glorious enough; at any rate I should not have been so long cut off from all that is dearest to me. [*Fam.* II.12; June 50]

For Cicero, life away from Rome was not really worthwhile. That is why only very reluctantly he accepted his post as governor. But this attitude was probably for the most part due to the most traumatic and humiliating experience of Cicero's life: what is conventionally called his exile (58-57 BC).[24]

During this period, Cicero must have been on the verge of a nervous breakdown[25], and more than once he contemplated the option of suicide.[26] All the usual consolations that he himself used to write to his friends when they were banned, at once lost their force now he had to flee himself. He did not show the courage that might have been expected from someone well versed in Greek philosophy; cosmopolitism nor the self-sufficiency of *virtus* could console him, having lost all that was dear to him and constantly suffering from what Doblhofer named "Heimwehkrankheit". In fact, Claassen calls his letters from exile an 'anti-consolatio'.[27] In this respect, Cicero formed a major contrast with e.g. Marcellus, "the only true philosophical exile in the Ciceronian epistolary collection".[28]

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24 Cicero himself never uses the word *exilium*, as is indicated by both Narducci 1997: 56 n. 4 and Claassen 1999: 160 – with one exception: in *Att.* I.16.9 it is used in connection with Clodius: *Erras, Clodi. Non te iudices urbi sed carceri reservarunt neque te retinere in civitate sed exilis privare voluerunt*. "Clodius, you are mistaken. The jury has not preserved you for the streets of Rome, but for the death chamber. Their object was not to keep you in the community but to deprive you of the chance of exile." The comment of Shackleton Bailey ad loc.: "If Clodius had been found guilty he could have saved his life and perhaps even his property by going into voluntary exile." (p. 319) Narducci also suggests that the term may be inexact from a juridical and technical point of view, because of the controversial status of Clodius' laws. Cicero reasoned accordingly in his *post reditum* speeches: because the *res publica* had temporarily ceased to exist, his own banishment could not be defined a true exile. Narducci 1997: 66; cf. *PS* IV.27-28 and Thuc. VII.77.7.

25 This somewhat anachronistic label is given by Rawson 1975: 118.

26 Interestingly enough, in the fifth book of his *Tusculanae disputationes*, after a long description of all possible individual evils which can befall the wise man (for each of these arguing that they are not really evils at all), Cicero offers the escape of death when all of these come together and are indefinitely prolonged (§117-118): *sic iniurias fortunae, quas ferre nequeas, defugiendo relinquas.* ("Thus by running away one can escape the assaults of fortune which one cannot face.") Narducci 1997: 69-72 claims to detect a complete change of mind in the *Tusculanae*, where Cicero "gives the impression of recanting his whole past" and now firmly believes in the power of the Stoic *virtus*. I do not think that the change of direction is so radical, and that Cicero is consistently trying to remain faithful to his cherished Academic course, personified by Philo of Larissa and Antiochus of Ascalon; the latter always stressed the high degree of concord between (Old) Academy, Peripatos and the Stoa, and exactly this is Cicero's last word in *Tusc.* V.119-120. Compare his attitude in *De finibus*, written just before the *Tusculanae*, where he is positive (in book V.75-96) *and* critical (in book IV) about the Stoa.

27 Claassen 1999: 83-85. For Cicero's writings from exile as part of a long tradition with stock themes, see the informative survey in Gaertner 2007.

28 Claassen 1999: 83. Only after his return was Cicero able to lift up his head again, but then he more and more lost sight of what really happened; in his *post reditum* speeches, he tried to rewrite his own history and to come out as the steadfast and never despairing hero, who sacrificed his own well-being on behalf of the Republic. He even went so far as to claim that the state had gone into exile (so to speak) instead of him, since with Clodius' activities in Rome the Republic for a time had practically ceased to exist. This course came to its questionable climax with Cicero's much-derided epic poetry *De consulatu suo* and *De temporibus suis*, where he finally transgressed the boundaries between history and myth. On Cicero's rather complex

5. Rome again

Urbem, urbem cole – let's return once more to Rome, and take a look at Cicero's speech in 59 BC for the defence of Lucius Valerius Flaccus, who was accused of extortion during his governorship in Asia the year before. In this speech, Cicero succeeds in mingling his chauvinistic sentiments for Rome with another one: the ethnic prejudices of the Roman citizens with regard to everything foreign, and especially Greek.[29] Generally spoken, respect for the cultural heritage from Greece is paired with prejudices concerning the contemporary Greeks, who had a reputation for levity, infidelity and luxury. But from time to time Cicero pretends a vast ignorance of things Greek and preaches a limited place for Greek culture in Rome.[30] In the *Pro Flacco*, when dealing with the Greek witnesses who have come to testify against Flaccus, Cicero makes a careful distinction between the 'good guys' and the 'bad guys' from Greece:

> *Sed sunt in illo numero multi boni, docti, pudentes, qui ad hoc iudicium deducti non sunt, multi impudentes, inliterati, leves, quos variis de causis video concitatos. Verum tamen hoc dico de toto genere* ***Graecorum****: tribuo illis litteras, do multarum artium disciplinam, non adimo sermonis leporem, ingeniorum acumen, dicendi copiam, denique etiam, si qua sibi alia sumunt, non repugno; testimoniorum religionem et fidem numquam ista natio coluit, totiusque huiusce rei quae sit vis, quae auctoritas, quod pondus, ignorant.*
>
> There are among them many reliable, well-educated and honourable men who have not been summoned as witnesses to this trail, but there are also many with no sense of shame, uneducated and shifty who, I see, have for various reasons been stirred up. Still, I do say this for the Greek people as a whole: I grant them literature, the knowledge of many sciences, I do not deny the attractiveness of their language, their keenness of intellect or richness of expression; and in short, I do not reject any other claims they make; but that nation has never cultivated a scrupulous regard for honesty when giving evidence, and it is quite ignorant of the meaning, the importance or the value of anything to do with it. [*Flac.* 9]

Later in the same speech, Cicero manages to divide the Greeks into two main categories, the Asiatic Greeks versus the Greeks from mainland Greece. The latter are somehow seen as closer to the Romans themselves; they do not play a very prominent part in this trial, but are sharply contrasted with the Asiatic Greeks in §62-64. But the

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representation of Marcellus' position, implying a positive reevaluation of his own time away from Rome, and a fanciful suggestion meant to convince Marcellus of the possibility to be in exile *in Rome*, cf. Cohen 2007, 121-126.

29 For a more extensive description of the rather complicated Roman attitudes towards Greek persons and things, see Trouard 1942, Petrocheilou 1974 and more recently, Gruen 1992 (esp. Ch. 6: The Appeal of Hellas) and Zetzel 2003.

30 Zetzel 2003: 121: "Cicero deliberately attempts to put Greek culture in its place – like the Greeks themselves, it should be subordinate to Rome and within Cicero's conception of Roman culture."

Asiatic Greeks do figure prominently in the *Pro Flacco*, and not in a favourable role.[31]

See how Cicero depicts the Asiatic witnesses:

> *Quam ob rem quaeso a vobis, **Asiatici testes**, ut, cum vere recordari voletis quantum auctoritatis in iudicium adferatis, vosmet ipsi describatis **Asiam** nec quid alienigenae de vobis loqui soleant, sed quid vosmet ipsi de genere vestro statuatis, memineritis. Namque, ut opinor, Asia vestra constat ex Phrygia, Mysia, Caria, Lydia. Utrum igitur nostrum est an vestrum hoc proverbium, "Phrygem plagis fieri solere meliorem" ? Quid? De tota Caria nonne hoc vestra voce volgatum est, "si quid cum periculo experiri velis, in Care id potissimum esse faciendum" ? Quid porro in **Graeco** sermone tam tritum atque celebratum est quam, si quis despicatui ducitur, ut "Mysorum ultimus" esse dicatur? Nam quid ego dicam de Lydia? Quis umquam **Graecus** comoediam scripsit in qua servus primarum partium non Lydus esset? Quam ob rem quae vobis fit iniuria, si statuimus vestro nobis iudicio standum esse de vobis?*
>
> I beg you therefore, witnesses for Asia, when you want to think over honestly what influence you bring to the court, to characterize Asia in your own minds and to remember not what foreigners usually say of you, but what you think of your own race yourselves. Your Asia, if I am not mistaken, consists of Phrygia, Mysia, Caria and Lydia. Is this proverb, then, ours of yours: "Spare the rod and spoil the Phrygian" ? And again, do you not have this saying about the whole of Caria, "If you want to make a risky experiment, try it first on a Carian" ? Or again, is there a more hackneyed and commonplace phrase in Greek than to say "the farthest of the Mysians" of anyone you despise? And what am I to say about Lydia? What Greek ever wrote a comedy without giving the leading slave part to a Lydian? What injustice is there done to you, then, if we decide to take you at your own valuation ? [*Flac.* 65]

Nothing but insinuations and witticisms, profiting from long-lasting prejudices which existed against the different nations in Asia, but very effective, when orally delivered! Nevertheless, Cicero succeeds in finding, even within the degenerate group of Asiatic Greeks, a tiny category that forms an exception, to wit the inhabitants of the small Lydian town of Apollonis:

> *Homines sunt tota ex Asia frugalissimi, sanctissimi, a Graecorum luxuria et levitate remotissimi, patres familias suo contenti, **aratores, rusticani**; agros habent et natura perbonos et diligentia culturaque meliores.*
>
> They are the most thrifty and honest men in the whole of Asia, completely untouched by the extravagance and unreliability of Greeks, yeomen content with their lot, farmers and countrymen. Their land is naturally fertile and made more so by their careful toil and cultivation. [*Flac.* 71]

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31 Cf. Classen 1985: 185ff.

Once again, trustworthiness and diligence are seen as characteristics of people from the countryside, who have stayed away from the degenerate life and habits of the city.

6. A visit to Athens

Finally, talking about Greece, let us change place once more and move to Athens. There we find Cicero during his educational tour in 79 BC, walking with a small group of friends and relatives in the deserted space of Plato's Academy. No longer in use and, presumably, severely damaged after the siege of Sulla in 86[32], the place offers precisely the quietness and the stream of associations that is fruitful for a philosophical discussion about the *summum bonum* and the happy life. Piso, one of Cicero's companions and the spokesman in book V, starts their ambulatory reflections by saying:

> *Tum Piso: "Naturane nobis hoc," inquit, "datum dicam an errore quodam, ut, cum **ea loca** videamus in quibus **memoria dignos viros** acceperimus multum esse versatos, magis **moveamur** quam si quando eorum ipsorum aut facta audiamus aut scriptum aliquod legamus?*
>
> Thereupon Piso remarked: "Whether it is a natural instinct or a mere illusion, I can't say; but one's emotions are more strongly aroused by seeing the places that tradition records to have been the favourite resort of men of note in former days, than by hearing about their deeds or reading their writings. [*Fin.* V.2]

Just like the beginning of the second book of *De legibus*, where we started our 'tour d'horizon' with the effect that Arpinum had on Cicero and Atticus, here too the same keywords are used, like *moveri*, *viri memoria digni* and also *videre*: it is the power of its presence and its *amoenitas* (the so-called "erlebte Welt"[33]) which gives these places (*ea loca*) their special attraction. *Mutatis mutandis*, this is still one of the major incentives why tourists take so much trouble and travel so far in order to visit historical places. And that is the reason why photos and slides of someone else's holidays can never have the same impact on us: they do not really 'move' us (*movere*)!

Piso is impressed by this special location and its historical dimension, and reminded of Plato and his successors. He concludes:

> *…tanta **vis admonitionis** inest **in locis**; ut non sine causa ex iis memoriae ducta sit disciplina.*
>
> … such powers of suggestion do places possess. No wonder the scientific training of the memory is based upon locality. [34] [*Fin.* V.2]

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32 Van der Wal 2005: 162-164.

33 Römisch 1968: 128.

34 For this reference to 'mnemotechnics', where images of things in various places stood for certain ideas or even words, by which the orator could remember them in the correct order, see Vasaly 1993: 102ff.

Cicero's brother Quintus sees the Colonus hill and thinks of Sophocles; Cicero's friend Atticus, being a low-profile follower of Epicurus, must think of the Master himself, since they passed by his gardens on their way to the Academy. Cicero shows himself also moved and for him the figure of Carneades comes to mind, seeing his *exhedra*; he concludes:

> … *ego autem tibi, Piso, assentior, usu hoc venire ut acrius aliquanto et attentius de* ***claris viris locorum admonitu*** *cogitemus.*
>
> But I agree with you, Piso; it is a common experience that places do strongly stimulate the imagination and vivify our ideas of famous men. [*Fin*. V.4]

Whereupon his young cousin Lucius neatly rounds off:

> *Quamquam id quidem infinitum est in hac urbe; quacumque enim ingredimur, in aliqua historia* ***vestigium*** *ponimus.*
>
> Though in fact there is no end to it in this city; wherever we go we tread historic ground. [*Fin.* V.5]

These passages, in the words of Ann Vasaly, "demonstrate the way in which places can stimulate the imagination, the memory and the intellect." Moreover, they also had a protreptic function: not mere curiosity is called for, but an attempt to imitate the great, exemplary men of the past.[35] *Movere*, *vestigia*: in a way, the tour is completed, and we are back where we started. What have we seen?

7. Conclusion

Cicero may be fond of his native Arpinum, but he has grown even fonder of Rome. In his forensic speeches, he values city and countryside positively or negatively, according to the best interest of the case at hand. In his political speeches and treatises however, and even more so in his letters, we can catch a glimpse of what Rome and Italy really meant to him. To Cicero, Rome is definitely the centre of his world! On the other hand, Arpinum and Athens inspire him to put more effort in the setting of the scene in *Leg.* II and *Fin.* V, creating a much more elaborate and attractive picture than Cicero normally does in his other treatises.

Finally, Cicero displays the very ambiguity regarding the Greeks that is characteristic of the Roman nobility as a whole: generally, there is sincere admiration for the Greek intellectual achievements of the past – Cicero was bilingual, as all Roman *nobiles* were deemed to be – but sometimes this must be camouflaged by

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35 The lesson that Lucius receives from Piso in Fin. V.6: Tum Piso: "*Atqui, Cicero, inquit, ista studia si ad imitandos summos viros spectant, ingeniosorum sunt, sin tantummodo ad indicia veteris memoriae cognoscenda, curiosorum; te autem hortamur omnes, currentem quidem ut spero, ut eos quos novisse vis imitari etiam velis*". ("Well, Cicero," said Piso, "these enthusiasms befit a young man of parts, if they lead him to copy the example of the great. If they only stimulate antiquarian curiosity, they are mere dilettantism. But we all of us exhort you – though I hope it is a case of spurring a willing steed – to resolve to imitate your heroes as well as to know about them."

pretended ignorance, and towards contemporary Greeks the Roman attitude was much more reserved and biased, based on shared popular prejudices. However, the more cultivated view was predominantly positive. Athens, or Greece, may already in Cicero's time have been worthwhile a nostalgic visit, to admire its historical sites, but even so, it was expected of educated Romans that they always maintain a healthy respect for all things Greek![36]

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36 Within the limited space available in this article, I have not been able to discuss one other aspect of Cicero's life seen from the angle of the city-countryside distinction, notably his many villas around Italy. These play a major role in the last part of his life, when the turmoil in Rome does not allow Cicero to have a serious role in politics (that is, until the final period with the struggle against Anthony and his *Philippics* has come), and he makes the best of it by withdrawing to his villas and working on his philosophical oeuvre instead. However, this shift in habitat is due to changed circumstances in Rome, which influenced the balance between life in the city and in the countryside, but were outside Cicero's control; therefore I decided to leave this aspect of the distinction for a separate treatment.

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